

What in the World is the World Wide Web?

*National Park
Service Director
Roger Kennedy and
Secretary of
Education Richard
Riley viewing the
World WideWeb
with students from
Ashburton
Elementary School.*

The World Wide Web (also known as the Web or WWW) has become one of the most exciting new tools for cultural resource managers in the latter half of the 20th century. Combining aspects of publishing, broadcasting, networking, teaching, interactive participation, resource sharing, and even fund-raising, the Web offers cultural resource managers exciting new opportunities and challenges.

Among the opportunities is the chance to bring your collections, sites, structures, exhibitions, publications, and expertise into the homes and offices of some 10+ million Web users.

Museums, archives, libraries, schools, tribes, professional organizations, and businesses are all developing Websites to share their cultural resources with the burgeoning audience of Web users.

Among the challenges is the need to keep the information lively, changing, audio-visually rich, story-oriented, and compelling for a relatively young, educated, and feisty international audience. The competition for the attention of this audience is fierce-leading to a surprisingly high level of sophistication in many cultural Websites and in many Web users. The payoffs include a rich array of public relations, educational, and outreach

advantages; as well as the challenge of being able to adequately handle the increasing volume of queries and visitors resulting from the increasing visibility of your cultural resources.

This issue of *CRM* serves as an entry-level manual for cultural resource managers wanting to learn how to use the World Wide Web as both an informational source and as an outreach tool. It contains articles on:

- How to search the WWW for effective use;
- Where to find assistance and resources in all aspects of Web use and development work;
- Guidance on future directions in governmental information policy;
- Case studies on Web development from the Smithsonian Institution, the Committee on the Preservation of the Anthropological Record, and the National Park Service; and
- Guidance on the legal aspects of Web work.

NPS Internet/World Wide Web

Ever since the invention of movable type, people refractory to change have grumbled that older methods weren't sufficient to get a message across. Smoke signals, drums, and courier pigeons had after all, extended the reach of the human voice. Writing had certainly extended both the reach and the shelf-life of messages.

But movable type did have its sway, after which came movable images, sometimes with subtitles, sometimes not. Now, in what some people describe as the post-Gutenberg age, we are at work on the process of moving from printed language to printed language and images.

Internet is a stage in an unfolding process of amplifying the volume of the data exchanged and the speed of transmission. There is no practical alternative to the Park Service's participation in this latest evolution of communications. Everybody is going to be using Internet or World Wide Web or something close to them.

We must be among those having this capability, just as we needed to be among those capable of verbal language (with children, we call it talking) and capable of making use of the miracle of writing. The only question really becomes, How should we add some wisdom to the store of information? How do we seek some quality amid the burgeoning of quantity?

Roger G. Kennedy
Director, National Park Service



What is the Web?

The Web is an internationally networked information system that presents text including databases and high resolution images, sound, and video on all aspects of knowledge. The effect is like an ever-growing multimedia encyclopedia that is being created interactively and cooperatively by the users.

The World Wide Web is also:

- A highly visible place to define who we are, what we have, and what we do to a rapidly growing audience currently estimated to be over 10+ million users.
- An innovative forum for testing out new ideas for sharing our resources in publications, exhibitions, interpretation programs, and educational activities integrating text, graphics, audio, and video.
- A showcase for our staff expertise in "Ask the Experts" columns, online magazines, and online chat sessions.
- A virtual visitors center for sharing practical information on our cultural resources with tourists.
- An opportunity to use our cultural collections and resources to leverage funding for digitization and outreach projects via digital vendors, corporations, and foundations.
- A powerful antidote to professional isolation in remote areas as the Web allows us to network with our professional colleagues and friends regardless of how distant they may be.
- A speedy way to maintain, share, and update policies, procedures, and training

in a single searchable place at minimal cost.

- A superior desktop research tool allowing access to digital information including databases made or held by libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural resource repositories and organizations internationally.
- A powerful broadcast studio for sharing information on our events, activities, and programs.
- A web of informational resources uniting cultural resources professionals internationally through both planned searches and serendipitous browsing via hypertext links.
- A place to sell products and request donations via cooperating associations in order to make cultural resources more self-supporting.
- A democratic assemblage of information that requires basic training before mastery is possible.
- The world's most powerful printshop for telling our stories and sharing our mission, history, and vocation with an international audience.
- The "killer application" that provides a common entry point to all other features of the Internet.

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Henry C. Kelly

Government Information Policy



The communication tools provided by contemporary technology provide convenient, practical, inexpensive access to people and information resources worldwide. Anyone with an inexpensive home computer willing to spend \$10 a month can sit at home and look at pictures

taken by the Hubble telescope almost as soon as the NASA scientists in charge of the project.

Interested citizens can look at government press releases, proposed legislation, and other documents the instant they are released. Online browsers can now participate in discussion groups that span the globe, search through digital